

MEXICAN WOLF ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT WORK GROUP
Summary Notes for Public Meeting on January 30, 2008

Location : Arizona Game and Fish Office, Pinetop, AZ
Date: January 30, 2008
Time: AZ Time: 1300 – 1600 MST
Panel Members: AMOC LEADS: AGFD - Terry B. Johnson (Chair); NMGFD – Matt Wunder; USDA-APHIS WS Chris Carrillo; USFS - Cathy Taylor; USFWS – John Morgart; WMAT – Krista Beazley

January 30

A. Welcome, Introductions, Ground Rules, and Agenda Review

Terry Johnson started the meeting at 1301 MST. The agenda was followed.

All people introduced themselves. Approximately 14 non-agency people attended the meeting.

Terry asked that general questions be directed to him. He will answer questions or direct to the AMOC representative who has the best knowledge. Members of the public can also ask questions of specific project personnel, by request through Terry.

Terry gave a brief description of the handouts provided to all participants.

Terry gave dates, times and locations for remaining 2008 AMWG meetings: 1) April 22, 6:00 – 9:00 pm, Reserve, NM; 2) July 29, 6:00 – 9:00 pm, Clifton, AZ; and 3) October 28, 6:00 – 9:00 pm, Silver City, NM.

B. IFT Discussions

Mike Sumner provided an IFT update. Mike provided year ending 2006 information, and updates on the recent year-end 2007 helicopter count/capture project. Mike stated that the 2008 year-end count will be finalized February 7, 2008. Mike provided background information on count methodologies for collared and uncollared packs. Pack histories from 2006 to 2007 were provided depicting suspected, confirmed and removed packs. A 2008 proposed translocation for M1008/F1028 was presented. 2007 outreach contacts were summarized. IFT personnel changes were also summarized in the update.

Terry provided the 2008 Annual Work Plan updates. A final version should be posted by mid-March.

C. Miscellaneous AMOC Updates:

John Slown provided an update on the NEPA scoping process for the 10j rule. There were approximately 12,000 email and 1000 hand-written comments. Contractor DJ Case will review

and summarize the comments received. DJ Case should provide a report on the scoping comments by early April.

John Morgart presented a briefing on interdiction, incentives and compensation. This program would be used as a tool to offset wolf induced livestock losses, and hopefully increase tolerance for this species to persist alongside the livestock ranching industry. USFWS Regional Director Benjamin Tuggle has been working to promote and fund this innovative program, and has talked with potential donors and cattle grower representatives on this subject.

Terry also provided additional incentives being pursued in Arizona. Compensation has been paid to provide cattle feed to allow cattle producers more options to reduce potential conflicts with wolves during the more vulnerable cattle calving season.

D. SOP Revision Discussion:

Terry presented background on the process of reviewing existing and creating new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). SOPs 5.0 – Initial Wolf Releases and 6.0 Wolf Translocations are up for public review. Both of these SOPs are being updated through Clarification Memos. Copies of public review drafts were provided to participants. Public comments can be made outside this meeting forum.

Recommended changes to both SOP 5.0 and 6.0 include increasing the livestock producer and public land permittee holder notification distance to 10 miles from the existing 5 miles and add a livestock industry contact for each state.

Terry also provided an update on proposed Clarification Memos for SOPs 11.0 and 13.0. These two documents still require agency Director review; public review will not occur until after a full internal review has occurred.

SOP 25.0 - Media Production Access to the Field Project entails how media access requests are to be processed by Project personnel. There can be specific demands on filming certain aspects of the project. This SOP will provide guidelines and more consistency to this user group.

SOP 27.0 – Population Monitoring of Mexican Wolves covers the general methodologies used to annually determine the minimum number of wolf packs and a minimum count of the population. Reviewer names have been removed until they agree to have their names used in this document.

Public comment for clarification memos for SOPs 5.0 and 6.0, drafted SOP 25.0 and SOP 27.0 are due March 15, 2008, by email or to the physical address provided on the website.

Other Business:

Terry announced that Larry Voyles has been appointed as the new AGFD Director. He will take office on April 1, 2008.

Laura Schneberger wanted informational signs posted informing them of the presence of wolves in certain National Forest areas in New Mexico.

Laura Schneberger also asked if an SOP will be developed on the distribution of telemetry equipment and wolf collar frequencies. Terry said that each agency of jurisdiction has individual guidelines on how this equipment and information is distributed. The respective IFTL is the person to contact when requesting these items. John Morgart said frequencies are not given out, but the frequencies are programmed into the lent out telemetry receivers in the form of a channel. Terry was asked if providing this equipment has negatively impacted any aspect of the Project. Terry replied that there is no evidence to support contentions that any negative impact has occurred to the Project as a result of loaning this equipment to ranchers and providing them with programmed channels by which to detect signals from wolves known to be in their area.

Discussion on road killed wolves. It was recommended to contact ADOT to look into the possibility of putting up signs in areas where wolf and automobile collisions are more likely to occur, such as Highway 191 between Springerville and Clifton. It was also recommended to increase outreach to the public on their responsibilities to report vehicle collisions with wolves.

There was discussion on releasing more wolves into the wild. Initial releases are still being considered, but John Morgart reminded that this can be done only after careful evaluation. Placing released wolves on top of established wolves might cause more harm than good.

It was noted the number of breeding pairs has declined, and placing new animals in the wild should be considered to correct this deficiency.

The meeting adjourned at 15:10 MST, due to rapidly deteriorating weather and travel conditions.